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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

Students need teacher guidance to have ample practice in understanding and using the concept of intonation and its inherent parts: (1) stress (placing emphasis); (2) pitch (higher or lower sound); and (3) juncture (pauses). To communicate effectively, students need to utilize stress, pitch, and juncture appropriately in oral and written discourse. A stimulating class environment will provide a variety of learning opportunities. Audio-visual materials may be used to introduce students to the use of stress in written discourse, after which students, working in committees, may practice stressing words differently within a sentence, and discuss how this changes meaning. Finally, students may read aloud to each other, using diverse patterns of stress. The concept of pitch may be introduced by demonstration on musical instruments, and with examples of varying spoken pitches, as in recordings of poets reading their work. Pitch should be emphasized as a tool for communicating ideas and content to others. Juncture emphasizes brief pauses within a word, as well as pauses between words. The teacher may read aloud various sentences without appropriate juncture and discuss with students why these sentences fail to communicate adequately. (Fifteen references are attached.) (SR)

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INTONATION, THE STUDENT, AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS

MARLOW EDIGER

Intonation emphasizes stress, pitch, and juncture in the language arts curriculum. In oral communication, the concept of stress places heavier emphasis upon one or more words within a sentence, as compared to other words. This is done to communicate more effectively with others. Linguists recognize four degrees of stress. A cassette recorder may be utilized by students to understand the concept of stress more thoroughly. Thus, a sentence may be spoken several times. Each recording of the sentence stresses words differently. In the following sentence, numerals appear after each word to indicate the degree of stress in ascending order:

The(2) cat(4) jumped(3) on(2) the(1) table(3). Primary stress is placed upon the cat, not some other animal or person jumping on the table. A second recording of the same sentence might have the following stress:

The(1) cat(2) jumped(3) on(2) the(1) table(4). Here primary stress is placed upon table, rather than some other object such as chair, box, or divan. Other levels of stress may also be recorded. Students are to understand how diverse degrees of stress of words in oral communication change the meaning of a sentence.

Linguists also recognize four degrees of pitch. Thus, a word in a sentence can be pitched higher or lower in the same sentence. With a cassette recorder, students may orally present a sentence several times with varying pitch of individual words. Thus in the following sentence, numerals after each word in ascending order of value, indicate the degree of pitch of individual words:

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1. Bob(2) is(3) here(4)?

2. Is(2) Mary(3) going(3)?

Words are pitched higher or lower in a sentence to express meaning in oral communication. Students need to experiment using a cassette recorder to change the pitch of words within a sentence. A discussion should then occur among students to indicate changes in meaning of a sentence when words are pitched at different levels.

Proper juncture is vital in oral communication as indicated by pauses when speaking. The following sentence has many meanings depending upon the pauses expressed (juncture):

1. At the picnic, they had ham, sandwiches, jello, salad, and milk.
2. At the picnic, they had ham sandwiches, jello, salad, and milk.
3. At the picnic, they had ham sandwiches, jello salad, and milk.

Students with teacher guidance need to explore and discuss content in sentences when juncture is changed within each sentence.

Teaching Stress, Pitch, and Juncture in Written Discourse

In written communication, students with teacher guidance need to attach meaning to the concept of intonation and its inherent parts, stress, pitch, and juncture.

To guide students to understand and use stress in writing, the teacher needs to provide a stimulating environment. Audio-visual materials, such as pictures, slides, filmstrips, and video-tapes may provide students with subject matter background information pertaining to achieving objectives emphasizing stress in written discourse. Ideas

come first, then stress may be emphasized in teaching-learning situations. Discussions among committees of students may assist the latter in achieving vital content. The content in terms of generalizations may then be used to pinpoint levels of stress in oral communication. Here, students may say a generalization orally and practice stressing words differently within the sentence. This may be followed by discussing how stress changes the meaning of words in content. Depth, rather than survey methods of teaching, is to be encouraged. Students need ample time to attach meaning when the same sentence is analyzed in terms of stressing words differently. Next, a cassette recorder should be utilized for student to say the same sentence sequentially with words stressed differently to notice additional meanings students attach to the concept of stress. Each sentence should be written down with numerals placed above or beside each word to indicate the degree of stress. Thus, the numerals 1, 2, 3, or 4 should be written to indicate four levels of stress. Disagreements among students pertaining to the level of stress must be discussed. Attempts at agreement should be encouraged, but not insisted upon.

In sequence from the oral communication endeavors to written discourse, readiness activities need to be in evidence. Talk needs to be presented in symbolic form. From the concrete, to the semi-concrete to the abstract may well be a broad guideline to follow. Thus, from the speaking activities discussed above, students with teacher guidance need to encode directly what had been presented orally. Students need assistance to encode ideas

1. accurately and creatively.

2. meaningfully and with purpose.

3. interestingly and comprehensively.

Individual differences need adequate provision. Thus, each student, regardless of capacity and achievement, needs to achieve in an optimal manner.

When discussing the contents of a library book using a seminar approach, students may write their results or conclusions within the involved committee. The written conclusions may be read orally using diverse patterns of stress. Thus within a sentence a word may be stressed differently from one oral reading to the next. Changes in meaning of the involved sentence should be noticed as stress is changed from each oral reading. Numerals should be written for each word in the the sentence depending on the level of stress being emphasized.

Students may also practice stressing words differently when reading orally

1. library books to each other.

2. a personally written narrative account.

3. directions on how to complete a learning activity.

4. poetry to others in a committee.

5. tall tales, myths, legends, fables, and fairy tales in the class setting.

The concept of stress is vital for students to understand and utilize in a given speaking or writing activity.

Pitch in Oral Communication Activities

Linguists recognize four degrees of pitch in saying words orally in content. With the use of audio-visual aids and reading materials, students may receive background information pertaining to the concept of pitch. On a piano keyboard, a teacher may play a series of notes to have students note that higher and lower levels of pitch are being played. Other musical instruments, such as a clarinet, trombone, and baritone horn, may also be played so that students realize degrees of pitch of sequential notes being played. The teacher should guide students to notice where notes are placed on a staff in music to notice higher and lower pitch. There are eight notes in an octive. Whereas, linguists recognize four degrees of pitch. However, on sheet music, students may note if notes are written higher or lower on a staff.

In sequence students should listen to recordings of poets or other speakers reading poetry or prose to notice the general degrees of pitch of spoken words. Any sentence may be replayed so that students may analyze the level of pitch of spoken words in the poetry or prose.

The teacher may then demonstrate to students the pitching of words higher or lower within a specific sentence. With repeating of the sentence, the teacher may change the pitch of different words. A cassette recording may be made of these sentences so that students in replays receive a general idea of the level of pitch of each sentence. Reasons need to be discussed with students as to purposes involved in emphasizing pitch of each diverse word within a sentence. Reasons need to be discussed with students as to purposes involved in emphasizing pitch in oral communication. Effective pitch aids in communicating content and ideas to others. Thus, quality pitch is not to be

emphasized for its own sake only, but rather as a tool to speak in a manner conducive to guiding others to secure relevant facts, concepts, and generalizations.

Students individually need to listen to their own recorded voices to notice how meanings change within a sentence if words are pitched differently from one oral reading to the next. In the following sentence, the levels of pitch may be stated in an oral manner in the following way:

The(1) dog(3) and(2) the(1) cat(3) walked(4) slowly(5). With the second reading of the same sentence, words may be pitched as follows:

The(2) dog(5) and the(2) cat(5) walked(3) slowly(2).

It is of utmost important for students to understand and attach meaning to the concept of pitch.

Reading orally from a variety of reference sources, students may practice pitching words at different levels to notice what makes for effective communication of ideas.

Juncture in Oral Communication

Juncture emphasizes brief pauses of sounds within a word (close juncture), as well as pauses between words (open juncture). Adequate pauses need emphasis when

1. words come in a series.
2. direct address is utilized.
3. a sentence ends in a period, question mark, or exclamation point.
4. appositives appear in sentences.
5. a dependent clauses comes at the beginning of the sentence.

To show the significance of juncture, nonexamples may be utilized in teaching-learning situations. Thus, the teacher may read to and discuss with students why the following fail to communicate adequately with others:

1. At the picnic, they ate meat sandwiches macaroni dessert cheese salad and bananas. Here it is vague as to the number of food items at the picnic.

2. Mary Jo Bob Kent Dean and Beth Ann were at the picnic. In written, as well as in oral discourse, the receiver of the message does not know how many attended the picnic. Pauses of adequate length in oral communication, and commas in written work need to separate words in series.

3. Ralph will you ride bicycle with me? Clarity in expressing ideas indicates that a pause is necessary when talking directly to Ralph. In writing, the pause is shown using a comma in direct address.

4. Bill ran to the store Harry came later. Separate sentences need punctuation marks. "Bill ran to the store." is a separate sentence from "Harry came later." For clarity, a pause of adequate length must separate the two sentences in oral communication. In written discourse, a period is used to end a declarative sentence.

5. David our cousin came to visit at our house. Students need to decide in this vague sentence if direct address is being utilized in that David is being spoken to or if cousin is an appositive and needs to be set apart in the following way:

David, our cousin, came to visit at our house.

6. When Bill threw rapidly the window was shattered by the baseball. A comma is needed after the introductory dependent clause "When Bill threw rapidly." Otherwise the reader may read the following "When Bill threw rapidly the window..."

With the use of nonexamples, a student may experience what juncture is not. With examples of what juncture is, a student practices the oral reading of subject matter where appropriate pauses are in evidence. The subject matter read should be

1. interesting and meaningful.
2. purposeful, as well as provide for individual differences.
3. stimulating to increase motivation for learning.

In Closing

Students with teacher guidance need to have ample practice in understanding and using the concepts of stress, pitch, and juncture. A variety of learning opportunities need to be in the offing. Each student needs to achieve optimally. To communicate effectively, students need to utilize stress, pitch, and juncture appropriately in oral and written discourse.

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